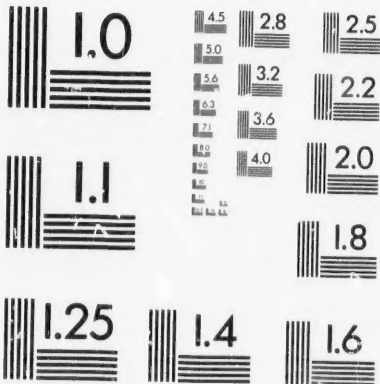


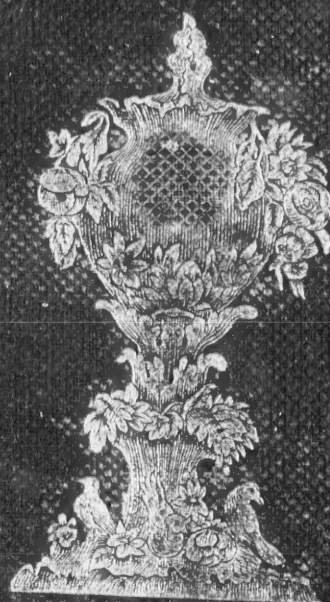
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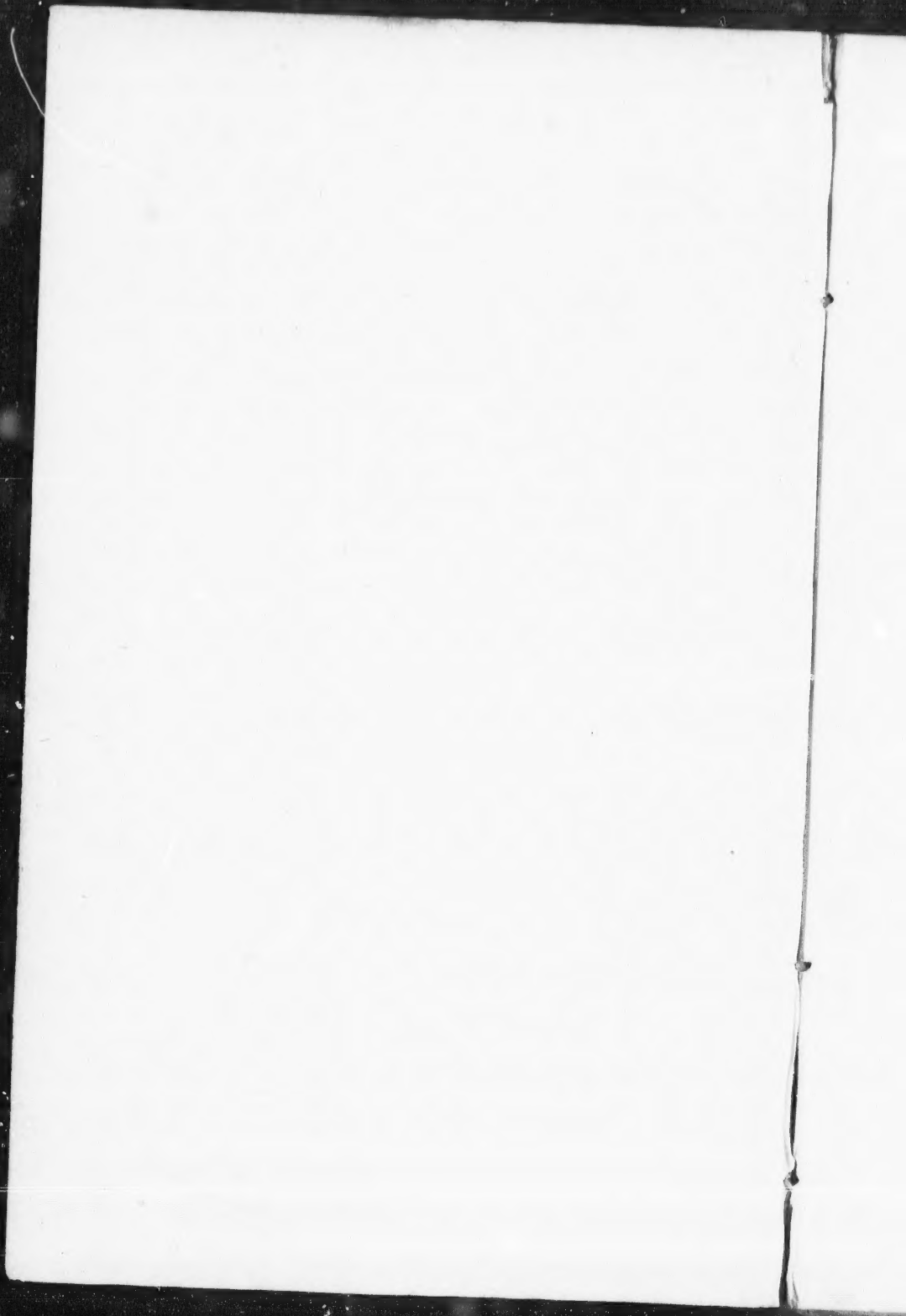


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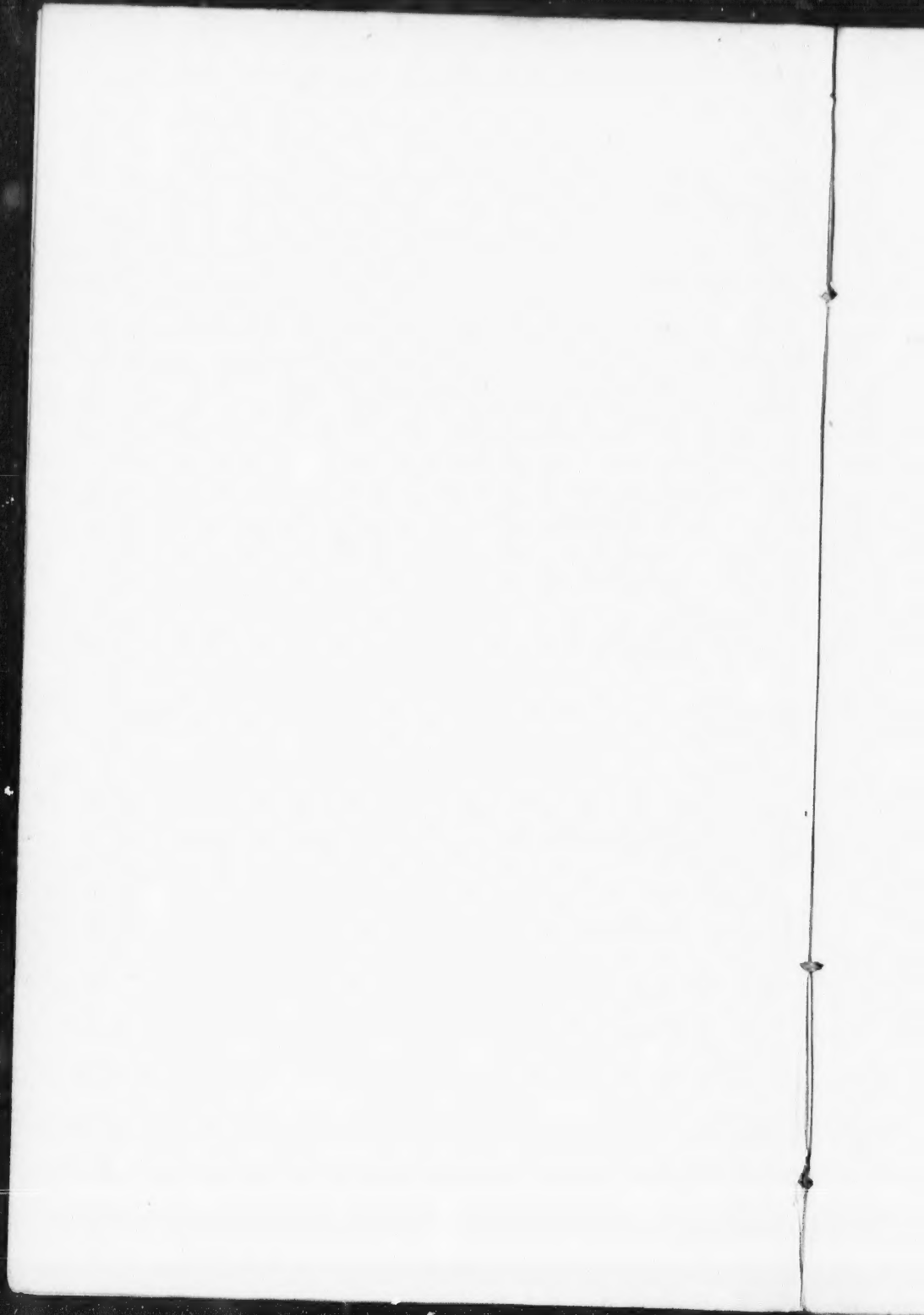
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THE
CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.



THE
CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON

AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY THE
REV. JOSEPH H. CLINCH, A. M.

BOSTON:
JAMES BURNS, 104 WASHINGTON STREET.

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1840.

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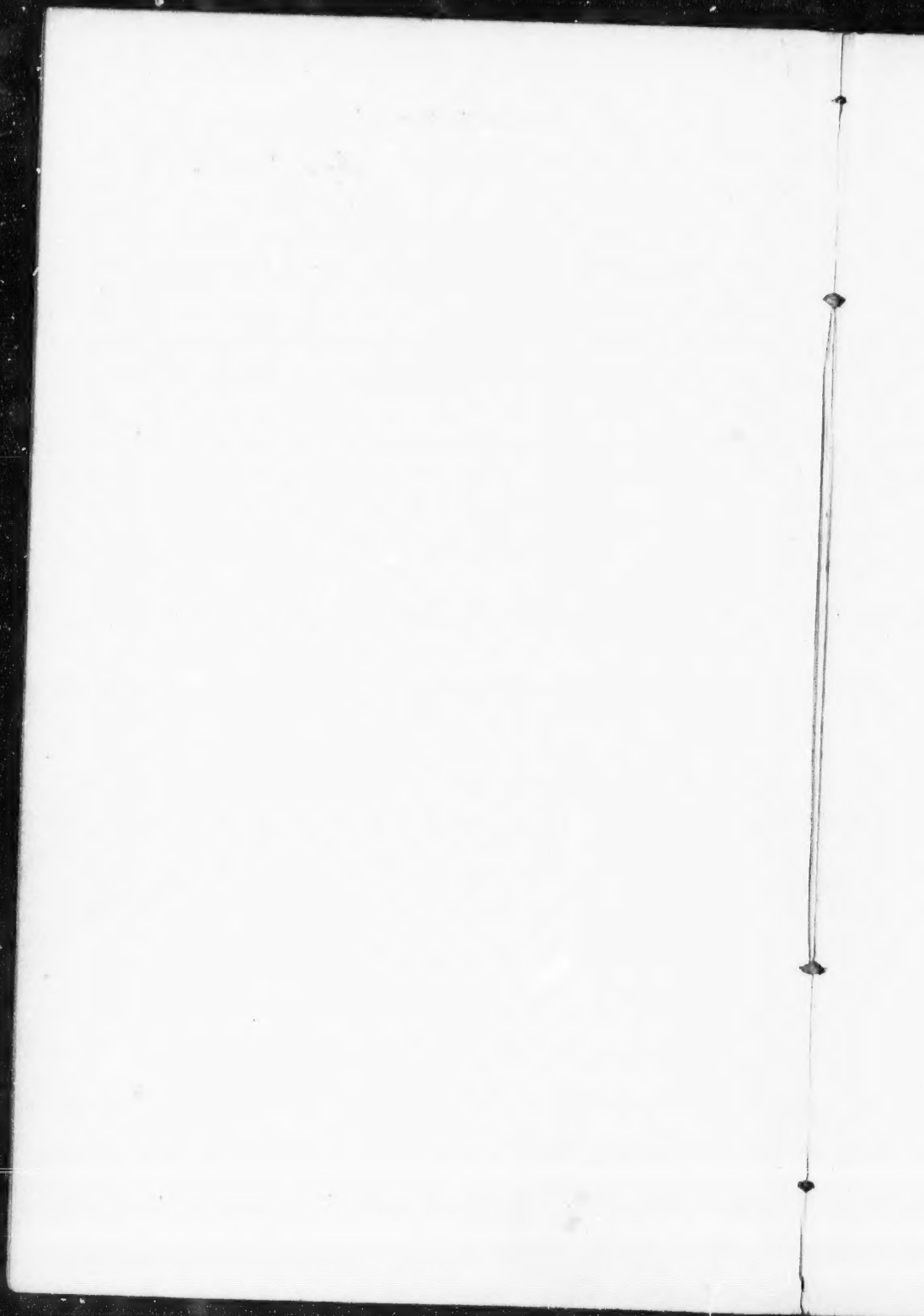
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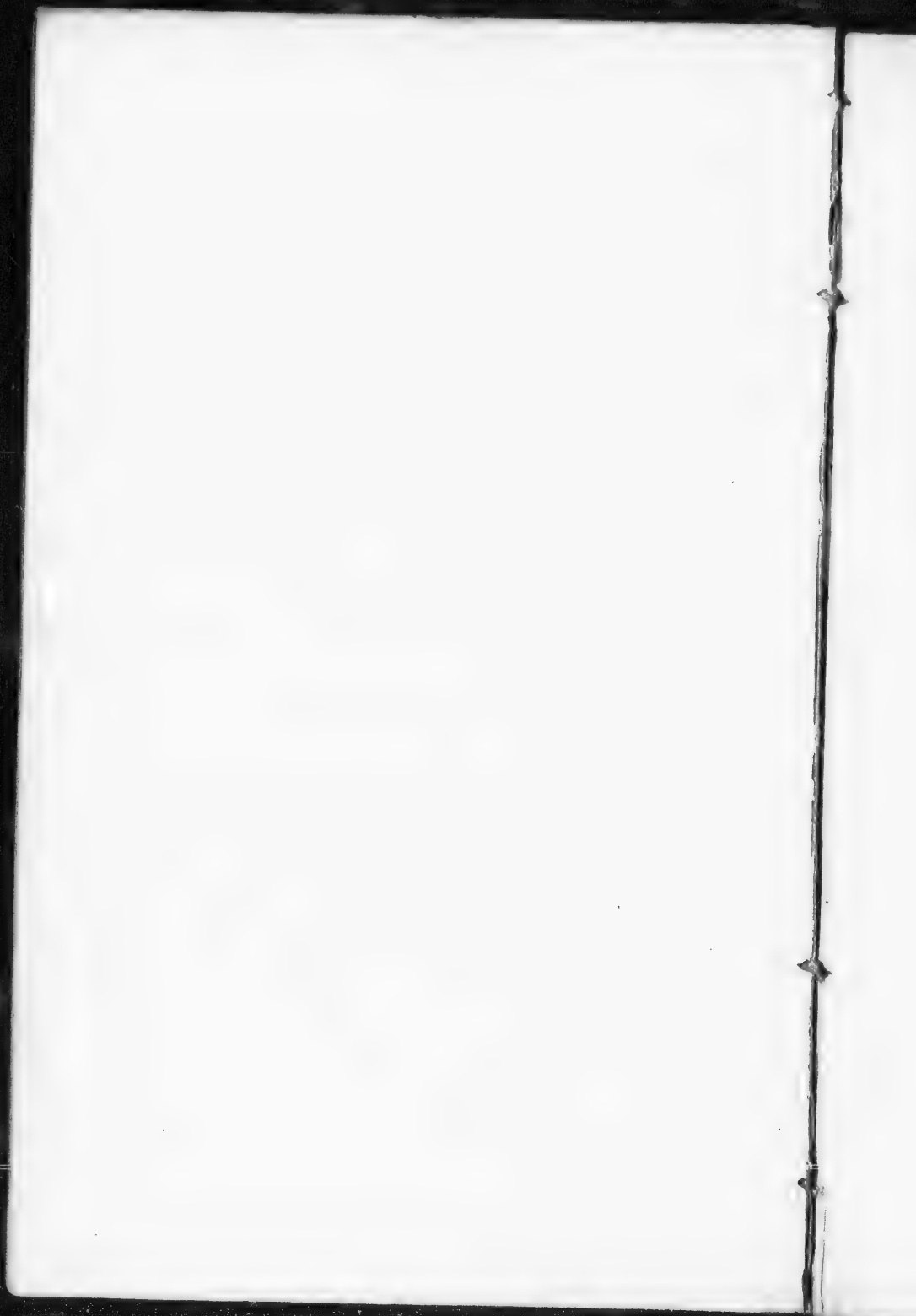
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TO
THE EROSOPHIAN ADELPHI
OF
Waterbille College, Maine,
THIS POEM,
DELIVERED BEFORE THEM
AT THEIR RECENT ANNIVERSARY,
IS DEDICATED.

Boston, September, 1839.



THE

CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.

I.

Nor through the maze of philosophic song,
Nor o'er the wilds of metaphysic lore,
Although to these unnumbered themes belong,
The muse to-day on trembling wing would soar;—
In homely guise she seeks to wander o'er
The fields of simple Narrative again,
And, taught by voices from the Past, to pour
Her descant wild, commingled with the strain
Which swept from Judah's harps o'er Babel's spacious plain.

II.

Broad is the plain of Shinar,¹ and as fair
As it is broad and fertile ; vineyards rise
And waving cornfields glimmer here and there
Through groves of spreading palms : the cloudless skies
Bend in blue arch above—the South wind's sighs
Breathe perfume round, and the Euphrates, slow,
Deep and majestic, like a mirror lies
Catching morn's earliest glory, as still low
The orient sun springs up, bidding all nature glow.

III.

But not on thee, Euphrates, his first smile
Falls, as he looks on Earth ;—long ere thy stream
Reddens beneath his radiance, the tall pile
Of Belus hails his coming, and a beam
Of brightness wraps his towers in one rich gleam
Of ruby and of gold : then down the wall
Runs the rich glory, till, like fairy dream,
Palace and arch and dome and pillar tall
Burst brilliant on the eye from Night's enclosing pall.

IV.

There standeth Babylon the mighty : ²—grand,
Lovely and lone amid the spreading plain,
E'en as an Eastern queen may proudly stand
Without a rival near : the eye in vain
Strives the stupendous object to contain ;
For by the river's brink on either side
For many a mile (by tall and gilded fane
And waving garden³ in exalted pride
O'ertopped) the giant wall outstretches high and wide.

V.

And many a dark-browed gate, by massive shaft
Flanked, and surmounted by deep chiselled stone,
On which the handiwork of skilful craft
Its efforts deemed exhausted, there hath shown
Serpents bright scaled in many a tortuous zone
Knotted and twined ;—the valves of solid ore
Below fling back the splendors o'er them thrown
From the unclouded sun, while on the floor
Broadly the shadows sleep by niche and corridor.

VI.

Above, high up along the frowning wall
Hang the embattled parapets, which sweep
In long perspective onward, until all
Melt in the distance, though the eye may keep
For many a mile beyond (until the deep
Dimness of space forbids) the towers which hide
The archers and balistæ ; bright they sleep,
Crowning the long defences, in the tide
Which morning pours around on all that home of Pride.

VII.

Within, along her streets of palaces,
The mighty stream of human life rolls by,—
Sorrow and Joy, and Pain and careless Ease,
Youth and Old Age—Beauty—Deformity—
Health—Sickness—Want and Splendor—on the eye
Press million after million, though the street
Hath yet uncrowded space : the busy cry
Of Labor, and the sounds of myriad feet
And Art's continual hum, in one wild murmur meet.

VIII.

Nor from the streets alone the sounds of life
Rise in commingled tones ;—the porticoes—
The temple steps—the walls—with noise are rife,—
The bridge across the river's deep repose
Swarms with its thousands, and the stairs⁴ which close
The stream on either hand are tenanted ;
And music over all its softness throws
From many a pinnace, gilt and garlanded,
With flags and silken sails o'er broad Euphrates spread.

IX.

And here and there along the level way
Pass menial bands, with robes of Tyrian dye,
Of guarding slaves, whose mistress goes to pay
Her early call of courtesy :—on high
O'er her gemmed litter spreads a canopy
Of silk whose crimson folds the morning gale
Plays gaily with, and flutters fitful by,
Lifting the fringe, whose silver bells their tale
Of tinkling music tell—a soft, rich, slumberous wail.

X.

High on the echoing road which bends around
The lofty summit of the broad-topped wall,
Sweeps by, with glittering pomp and thundering sound,
The chariot of some noble, whom the call
Of duty or of pleasure wakes to all
The glories of the scene :—his prancing steeds
Fret on the golden bit, and toss their tall
White plumes, and shake their breast-encircling beads,
And stamp with restless foot, if aught their course impedes.

XI.

While stationed at each gemmed and studded rein
Attendants run in splendid dress arrayed,
Their turbans looped with jewels and their cane
Of office with bright rings of gold inlaid ;
And low upon the dust each servile head
Bends in profound obeisance as that train
Of gorgeous state sweeps by ; too well repaid
If the proud Satrap from his height but deign
To wave his ivory wand, and bid them rise again.

XII.

But lo! he pauses o'er the Western gate,
And looks across the plain with eager gaze,
Along whose level margin (which but late
Slept still and silent in the day-god's blaze,
Moving alone with morning's gauze-like haze,)
Now sweeps a long, dark, slowly moving train,
Which, as it nears the City wall, displays
Steeds, camels, oxen with the groaning wain,
And footmen, dragging slow the weary step of pain.

XIII.

Who may they be?—Traders from foreign land
Laden with goodly merchandise?—bright gold
From distant Ophir? gems from Afric's strand?
Linens from Egypt? gums of price untold,
And rich Sabæan odors, to be rolled
In smoking incense at the gleaming shrine
Of Belus or of Ashtaroth? or hold
Those heavy wains, the juice of Sibmah's vine,
Or that from farther hills where milder suns may shine?

XIV.

Yet why with lance and banner come they on?
Thy need not these on peaceful journey bent
O'er Shinar's plain to strong-armed Babylon.
Is it some distant Satrap who hath sent
His troops with long owed tribute, to prevent
The monarch's rising anger?—or the king
Perchance hath humbled Judah, for he went
From Babylon so purposed,⁵ and doth bring
The nation at his feet their lives and wealth to fling.

XV.

Yes! 'tis rebellious Judah;—gleaming there
In splendid heaps upon the wains behold
Flagons and cups and goblets passing fair,
And rich chased chalices with lips of gold—
The vessels of their worship—formed to hold
Incense and wine and blood of sacrifice;
And golden lamps, and, wrapped in many a fold,
The rich, mysterious Veil; and gems of price
Which decked her priests who stood in sacrificial guise.

XVI.

And altars there are piled in goodly show,
Plated and cased with gold, around whose rim
Rise crowns of chiselled ore in many a row,
With brazen gratings for the quivering limb
Of lighted sacrifice : the gold is dim
Still with the sprinkled blood which fell around
As, with the smoke, to Heaven arose the hymn
From white stoled Levites, chanting to the sound
Of psaltery and of harp within the Temple's bound.

XVII.

And there are silver cymbals which gave out
Their clashing music in the battle's van,
And hampered trumpets which prolonged the shout
Which, through the land to hail the new-moon, ran
From Beersheba to ocean-girdled Dan ;
There in rich piles the golden censers lie
Dark with the incense smoke which rose to fan
The sacrificial flame,—and, piled on high
Jewels and gems and vests and cloths of gorgeous dye.

XVIII.

And there, - - - counting all the splendid heap,
The gilded table stands, whereon were laid,
In golden baskets richly carved and deep,
The cakes and loaves of consecrated bread ;
And there the Cherubim with wings outspread,
Guarding the Mercy Seat—the golden lid
Of the much treasured Ark,—wherein the dread
Stone tables of the Law are closely hid,
And many a holy thing to touch and sight forbid.⁶

XIX.

The escort to the gates their jaded steeds
Urge in advance : wide at their coming flies
The brazen door, and he the band who leads
Springs through the arch and to the palace hies,
To meet the Viceroy : there in humble guise
He speaks the monarch's orders to admit
The captive nation—furnish due supplies—
Assign their quarters—and at season fit
Duties entrust to each which none might intermit.

XX.

The massy bolts from every gate are drawn
Along the Western wall, and two by two
The weary captives march desponding on
To exile and to bondage: there were few
E'en in that home of triumph who could view
With tearless eye the sad procession form;
On every captive check the pallid hue
Of pain and sorrow sat, and though still warm,
Like Summer's rain, their tears, how bitter was that storm!

XXI.

There passed the sorrowing Monarch, by decree
Of his stern foe forbid to see the woes
Which none but demons could untroubled see;
A linen bandage winds its foldings close
Around his orbless brow,⁷ which burns and glows
With smart of recent torture;—whilst his mind
Revolves the double prophecy,⁸ he knows
The truth he doubted once, when *doubly* blind,
From other hands than God's, safety he sought to find.

XXII.

There passed the weeping Priest;—his ephod rent,
His long, white vestment deeply soiled with blood,
Partly from bleeding victim when he bent
Before the altar,—partly from the flood
Which flowed around him as in arms he stood
Guarding the Temple from the spoiler's hand—
But all in vain! In melancholy mood
He treads the streets of exile 'mid the band
With bondage cursed for sin, slaves in a foreign land.

XXIII.

There passed the widowed Mother, at whose side
Two weeping orphans clung—their father lay
Lifeless amid the desolation wide
Of overthrown Jerusalem, and they
Following their wretched mother far away
From their dear home, now swelled the troubled stream
Of grief, which through the open gates, to-day,
Of Babylon flowed in, o'er which no beam
Of hope or comfort fell, its darkness to redeem.

XXIV.

There passed the childless Father, though his arm
Bore what was late of mine the youngest born,
Fair scions which, alas! the ruthless storm
Had from the blighted trunk too rudely torn;
For days of pain and sorrow he had worn
That faded flower upon his heart, too dear—
Too precious to relinquish; and forlorn
His silent partner followed ever near,
Yet sorrow's founts were dry, for neither shed a tear.

XXV.

And there the noble Youth, whose brow displayed
The lines of age by toil and misery traced,
And at his side a pale and weeping maid
Hangs on the arm which clasps her fragile waist;
In happier days that sinking form had graced
Her childhood's home, and that wan lover deemed,
With youth's impatience, Time too leaden-paced,
And oft of coming hopes and joys he dreamed,
And that near marriage-feast which all too distant seemed;

XXVI.

Till, when that morning dawned, and many a guest
Donned for the bridal halls his robes of pride,
He saw the troops of Babylon invest
The ancient City round on every side ;—
And hill and vale in morn's refulgent tide
Flashed with the gold and armour of the foe,
And in the home where Pleasure should abide
Came, all unbidden guests, Distress and Woe
And Terror, o'er the board their blasting sight to throw.

XXVII.

On—on they passed :—a melancholy train—
A concentration of all care—all woe—
All heart-subduing sorrow and all pain
That Hate and War and Conquest can bestow ;
There all the closest ties the heart can know
Asunder had been rent, and despot Hate
Had bade the cup of bitterness o'erflow,
And yet it was not full ! On their sad state
Exile and pinching want and degradation wait.

XXVIII.

Crushed and deserted Judah ! thou hast left
No name among the nations ; for a race
Once hated—scorned and humbled, has bereft
Thee of thy ancient heritage and place :
And slavery now, and toil and deep disgrace
Must be thy portion. Once thou wast a queen,
Virgin of Judah ! and thy haughty face
Was beautiful, but dreadful to be seen
By the fierce nations round who on thy aid would lean.

XXIX.

But now thy sceptre is departed :—lone
Thou sittest by the streams of Babylon,
Waking in grief thy wild harp's saddest tone,
Wailing the former days and glories gone ;
For of thy greatness now remains not one
Poor remnant, but within a foreign land,
A stranger and a slave, thou toilest on,
Eating the bread of sorrow, and thy hand
Fulfil from day to day a master's stern command.

XXX.

No Temple sacred to JEHOVAH's name,
Arises near thee in its solemn state,
Echoing with hallelujahs' loud acclaim,
From countless numbers, who impatient wait
Admittance at its strong, majestic gate,
Or from its ample court in volumes vast
Rolling the smoke of sacrifice : stern Hate
Hath to the ground its lofty turrets cast,
And o'er its broken walls hath Desolation passed.

XXXI.

The holy fire⁹ in darkness hath gone out,
So long preserved with strict religious care,
No more in arms thy gathered people shout,
As white-robed priests the Ark to battle bear ;
The Urim and the Thummim¹⁰ are not there,
Nor golden cup of manna undecayed,
Nor Aaron's rod with budding blossoms fair,
Nor those mysterious tablets which were made
On Sinai's awful top, when God his power displayed.

XXXII.

Thy *sins* have been thy curse, and God hath used
 But as an instrument proud Babel's might,
 To humble and to punish ;—that, accused
 By thine own thoughts, and by the holy light
 Which prophecy shall shed, thy bondage-night
 May in its dark and lonely hours display
 Visions of mercy to thy spirit's sight,
 To point to thee Hope's angel-trodden way,
 And bid thee feel thy sins, and mourn, repent, and pray.

* * * * *

XXXIII.

Years have passed by :—to Dura's spacious plain
 Millions are hurrying, not from thee alone,
 Thou royal City, but they pour amain
 From distant provinces and tribes unknown ;
 The neighbor towns and cities, too, have thrown
 Their streams of life thereon, and from the crowd
 Voices of every dialect and tone
 Rise mingled, as of old the discord loud
 Rose from that very plain,¹¹ when God dispersed the proud.

XXXIV.

Thither from Persis came they, and the lands
Of far Carmania—Syria also sent
Her rough barbarians, with the distant bands
Of Bactria and Armenia;—others bent
Their steps from Media, and from many a tent
Arabia poured her thousands; and the men
Of Tadmor came: Elam and Susa lent
Their dwellers, with Ecbatana, for then
A summons called them there which none might hear again.

XXXV.

Rising in splendor o'er each meaner thing,
Tall, lone and glorious, stands a god of gold,¹²
Whose features in the sunlight glimmering
Smile warm and bright—though all within is cold.
Ah! many an idol since to man hath told
Its falsehood by such smiles. Then clear and high
Arise the voice of heralds, who unfold
The King's command, to worship there or die
In yonder sea of flame that roars and flashes nigh.

XXXVI.

Forthwith harmonious tones upon the air
Of that still morning rise with thrilling note,
Wild as the sounds Æolian harp-strings bear,
Now swelling near—now more and more remote,
Yet in such sweet accordancy they float,
That magic hands appear to guide the strain ;
The hushed and ravished multitude devote
Attention so profound, that they remain
Forgetful of the god a moment on the plain.

XXXVII.

Sudden the music ceased ; to thought recalled,
The head of all, as one vast body, bowed ;
Prostrate upon the earth they fall, appalled
By the dark smoke which rose in sulph'rous cloud
From the dread furnace near ; the mighty crowd
Sank—but erect, amid the suppliants there,
Three noble forms remained—untrembling—proud—
Bold in a righteous cause, they scorned to share
The rites to idols paid—the foul, unholy prayer.

XXXVIII.

And from the fiery trial forth they came
Unblackened and unhurt ; no hair was singed—
No garment injured in that sea of flame ;
The fires had lost their energies, and tinged
Scarce with a ruddier glow those features fringed
With manhood's earliest down ; for God was there
Supporting those who honored him, nor cringed
Before a tyrant who would gold compare
With Him who rolls the orbs through boundless fields of air.

XXXIX.

Awed into admiration of His power,
The King ascribes to God the honor due,
And loads with gifts the men who would not cower
Before those threats whose ruthless ire they knew,
Proving by faith that Judah's God was true ;—
Stations of trust he delegates to those
Whom late he doomed to ruin, and the Jew
Perceived his burdens lightened, and his woes
Vanish before the smiles the monarch now bestows.

XL.

Heavy the griefs that Judah's heart had pressed :
For black had been her sins, and long the scroll
Of her abominations ; she had dressed
Her priests in Baal's vestments, and the stole
Of those who from unhallowed censers roll
The incense unto Dagon, and had built
To unknown gods and devils, and the whole
Bright host of Heaven rich altars, and in guilt,
E'en in God's house, the blood of sacrifice had spilt.

XLI.

She had profaned His Temple, and had given
The worship due to Him to tree and stone,
And thus called down the bitter wrath of Heaven
Long waked, but long delayed :—her crimes had grown
Beyond the reach of pardon, and the throne
And sceptre passed away to other hands ;
Then in her long captivity her moan
Ascended to the Mercy Seat, her bands
Are one by one relaxed, her wakening heart expands.

XLII.

Again the prophets of the Highest bear
Kind messages of mercy, holding out
Hope, pardon, peace, to penitence and prayer,
But bitterer woes to those who blindly scout
The offers of His love ; doubt after doubt
Melts like a cloud away ; for grief had taught
Humility of heart, and whilst about
Their bosoms played the ever cheering thought
Of freedom and of home, their cares they half forgot.

XLIII.

Among the messengers of God, who came
In mercy to his people, Daniel rose,
For wisdom honored much,—for holy flame
Of inspiration more ;—he came with those
Sad exiles to the City of their foes
A child,—supported o'er the toilsome road
In that safe seat a mother's love bestows,—
Her tireless arm ; and well the precious load
Repaid her tender care and blessed her lone abode.

XLIV.

And former monarchs to their palace led
And loved the Hebrew boy, and soon he knew
All lore by Eastern sages writ or read,
And angels from the founts of wisdom flew,
And bathed his brow with inspiration's dew,
And touched his lips with fire ; and when there came
Heaven-messaged visions on the monarch's view,
That youth put all Chaldea's seers to shame,
And thus to honors rose, to favor and to fame.

XLV.

The courts of Belus' temple flash with light
Gleaming from thousand lamps ; around are spread
Banquets of royal luxury, which invite
The sated sense anew. His mighty head
High o'er the feast,¹³ with costly incense fed,
The grim-eyed idol rears ; and wanton song,
And drunken revel, by Belshazzar led,
Rise round it as fit worship, and prolong
E'en to the midnight hour the joys of that lewd throng.

XLVI.

Dizzy with love and wine, and deeming all
Those pleasures naught, till stern excitement throw
Her frenzied joys around him, at his call
The slaves of proud Belshazzar, bending low,
Bear in the golden cups, whose burnished glow
Reflected once the altar of the LORD,
In Judah's ruined Temple ; they o'erflow
Now with unhallowed wine, where rites abhorred
And sensual pleasures reign around the madman's board.

XLVII

And Nisroc, Ashtaroth and Bel behold
Their sin-polluted altars freely flow
With deep libations from those cups of gold
Used in JEHOVAH'S worship long ago ;
The very flames that o'er their grimness throw
A flickering radiance, rise from golden stem
And polished branch, which caught its earliest glow
From thy shrined Sheekinah, Jerusalem,
Flashing reflected light on purple, ore and gem.

XLVIII.

What dims the waning lamps?—Hath morning burst
Too soon upon the revel?—No! a light
As brilliant, but less gladsome, catches first
The trembling monarch's eye, and blasts his sight.
His cheek hath lost its flush, and wild affright
Seizes on him and all his thoughtless crew;
Along the wall a visioned hand doth write
Strange characters of fire, whose threatening hue
Throws with a fearful glare each object on the view.

XLIX.

Summoned in haste with scrolls of mystic lore,
And potent rods and robes of sombre dye,
And girdles, with strange letters painted o'er,
Swept by their snowy beards, the wise men hie,
And by the seat of splendor prostrate lie,
Waiting the King's behest; his trembling hand
Points to the flashing letters, and with eye
Averted still, he bids the wondering band
Reveal the words of fate that all might understand.

L.

Dismayed they pause : their thoughtful eyes they strain
Long on the gleaming words, then seek the line
Of wisdom in their scrolls, but seek in vain ;
Each to the other makes some silent sign
To ask if there be hope the words divine
To read and to unravel, but reply
Receiveth none, and still the letters shine,
Glaring with awful brightness from on high,
Full on the baffled seers and the pale company.

LI.

“ What ! is there none whose magic skill can read
Those letters of astonishment and fear,”
The King exclaimed, “ and to their purport lead
My troubled thoughts ? Is there *no* prophet here ?
I will give glory to the godlike seer
Who leads my mind this hidden thing to know.
Wealth shall be his, and fame—he shall appear
Enrobed in regal scarlet, while below
The throne but three degrees his seat I will bestow.”

LII.

Then, called in haste, Daniel before him stood,
Severe, yet modest, and unawed, as one
Long conversant with courts ; the wall he viewed
A moment where the wondrous writing shone,
Then turned him to the King :¹⁴ " to me be none
Such gifts, O Prince ! but hear from lip unpaid
The doom thou hast awaked and cannot shun,
The judgments now to burst upon thy head,
Traced by the hand of God, and soon to be displayed.

LIII.

" Thy sire by Sorrow's teaching learned to own
That God alone rules Earth : and that His will
Bestows on each the sceptre and the throne,
Till they their several destinies fulfil :—
And this *thou* knew'st ; and yet, rebellious still,
Hath scorned JEHOVAH, daring to pollute
These holy vessels, and from them to spill
Libations at an imaged monster's foot,
Honoring above thy God the dæmon or the brute.

LIV.

“Hear then the message HE to thee conveys
By this mysterious writing, clear and bright :
MENE—thy kingdom hath fulfilled its days,
Thy reign shall end on this eventful night :—
TEKEL—the balance hath declared thee light,
For thou by God’s just judgments hast been weighed,
PEREZ, division cometh, and the might
Of Media and of Persia shall invade
This thy ancestral seat, and seize thy sceptre-blade.”

LV.

The prophet’s duty is fulfilled—the hand
Fades, like a fleeting shadow, from the view,
No longer in their withering brightness stand
Along the wall the mystic words which threw
So late around their doom-denouncing hue ;—
Through heavy arch and brazen gateway passed
The holy man, though oft as he withdrew,
Pausing, a sad and pitying glance he cast
O’er the pale revellers there—that banquet was their last.

LVI.

But with the hand and with the words of fate
Passed to the winds the terrors which had thrown
Their cloud upon the festival ;—elate
Belshazzar bids his guests in gayest tone
Drown graver thoughts, and leave the dim, unknown
Future to seers and dreamers :—high in pride
He lifts a bowl, whose golden radiance shone
Bright through the purple stream which laves its side,
As on the ground he pours the full libation tide :—

LVII.

Then to his lip :—but why in startled haste
Doth his unsteady hand relax its hold,
Bathing the marble pavement with rich waste,
As rings upon its stones the empty gold ?
Why, springing to his feet, doth he unfold
The royal purple from his breast, and throw
His diadem to Earth ? A shout hath rolled
From broad Euphrates' banks, and cries of woe
Rise on the midnight air and fill the courts below.

LVIII.

The Median is upon thee ! He hath turned
Aside Euphrates' waters¹⁵ from their bed,
And through its arch and empty channel learned
The pathway to thy palace, and hath sped
Up through the open gates, which should have spread
Their barriers riverward, his course to stay ;
Hopeless defence ! the infuriate foemen tread
O'er useless arms, and on the marble way
The wine enfeebled guards and silken menials slay.

LIX.

On, on like torrents from the mountains hurled,
Rush the invaders to their glorious prey ;
The joys of sense have all their lures unfurled,
And beckon onward through the bloody way :
Riches more vast than in her wildest play
Fancy could paint or Avarice could require,
Doth Babel, in her regal affluence, lay
Before the astonished sense, and that soft fire
By lewd Astarté lit, and fanned by wild Desire.

THE CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.

LX.

And slight repulse from faint-souled troops they meet,
And soft, luxurious slaves ; wide, wide they swarm
Through many a sculptured arch and palaced street,
And Belus echoes to the loud alarm ;
Around his feet the jewelled floor is warm
With blood of thousand worshippers, who lift
Their hands to him for safety,—but his arm
And glance alike are impotent, and swift
The Median's sabre sweeps ;—the tomb hath many a gift.

LXI.

The courts which echoed late with shout and song
And revelry and mirth,—resound with wail
And shriek and lamentation, loud and long ;
The voice of Power can now no more avail,
Nor Beauty's mute appeal, as trembling, pale,
She spreads her hands and lifts her brow of light,
And those wild, lustrous eyes, whose eloquent tale
Then first no pity moved ;—the dæmon might
Of Fury baffled long, now gains its curbless height.

LXII.

But of that coward herd which knelt before
The Persian's arm, one heart had thrown aside
His woman's softness, and stood forth no more
A pale-eyed Sybarite ; but kingly pride,
And stern resolve to meet the o'erwhelming tide,
And noble daring, in his form and eye,
At length had found their home, and flashing wide
His death-bestowing scymetar on high,
Swept with the whirlwind's power, and bade the bravest fly.

LXIII.

Behind a wall of slaughtered foes he stood,
Like lion turned to bay ; around him fell
Arrow and javelin, thirsting for his blood,
In frequent shower, ringing continuous knell
Upon his full orb'd shield ; and oft the swell
Of victory's shouting, premature, arose,
As near him flew some lance directed well,
Or grazing arrow point, for still his foes
Feared his excited ire, nor dared around him close.

LXIV.

Sudden a shout was heard—a warrior sprang
Beyond the bleeding mound, and, hand to hand,
Long time their clashing blades and bucklers rang,
While breathless stillness falls on either band ;
Invaders and invaded, on the grand
Yet awful scene, intensely looking on,
And leaning on their useless weapons, stand ;
One falls—Belshazzar's fated life is gone—
Darius—thine alone is wide-walled Babylon.

LXV.

Babel hath fallen, but Judah is not free—
She hath but changed her master—yet her yoke
Doth daily press less heavily, and she
Dares to believe that Freedom's keen-edged stroke,
Which once in Egypt slavery's fetters broke,
Full soon may fall. Her sons to honors rise—
Jewels and gold adorn the purple cloak
Which vests her Daniel with authorities,
And powers, assigned to none but those whom monarchs prize.

LXVI.

O'er six score subject provinces preside
As many favored nobles, over whom
Is placed a high triumvirate, and wide
Its sway, and irreversible its doom ;
It holds the reins of empire, and the room
Wherein it sits, displays a thronging crew
Of summoned princes, doffing helm and plume
Before its power,—but chief is honor due
To him, first noble there,—a captive and a Jew !

LXVII.

But in that chair of state doth Daniel meet
The meed that haunteth all of humble state,
By merit lifted to the dizzy seat
Of influence and honor :—Envy—Hate—
Assumed Contempt—yet inward Dread—await
Around his path ; his rivals, day by day,
Station their spies around his palace gate,
And seek to snare him, but his perfect way
Beams, like the virgin ore, more bright from the assay.

LXVIII.

And *therefore* he must fall : his virtue shines
Too bright, too dazzling, for their clouded eyes,
And his stern honor thwarts their base designs ;
He worships not their gods. The fact supplies
A ready path to vengeance. Then arise
Fawning and cunning voices round the throne :
“ O King ! the good, the noble and the wise,
Have framed an edict, that to thee alone
For thirty days shall prayer or suppliant vow be known.

LXIX.

“ And if to any other, save to thee,
The voice of supplication shall ascend,
Then with the lions let his portion be,
Who dares the laws of Media to offend ;
That this be ’stablished, let thy hand append
Thy seal and signature, that every one
Where’er thy mighty empire shall extend,
May know the royal will.” The deed is done,—
And Media’s laws change not,—Daniel, thy race is run !

LXX.

The edict has gone forth :—" behold how smiles
The stern triumvir as he hears his doom !
Let him sneer on—he shall not scape our wiles,
But sink accursed within a living tomb :—
The sun's descending glory lights the room
Where stands our victim, but its parting ray
Tomorrow shall that gorgeous hall illume,
And find no Daniel there !" —He kneels to pray,
Turning with hand and eye far to the West¹⁶ away :

LXXI.

Sunrise is gilding Babylon :—again
His foes assemble in the street below,
Watching with eager eye and ear, to gain
More certain proof their victim to o'erthrow ;
Morn's balmy breathings through the casement flow,
And there again the holy prophet kneels
In calm yet deep devotion, and the glow
Of solemn rapture lights his cheek, and seals
His brow with impress bright, which Truth alone reveals.

LXXII.

And noon again beholds him with his hands
Expanded wide towards the bright Western skies,
Where once in worship from the distant lands,
The tribes went up to offer sacrifice ;
And as to Heaven his prayers, like incense, rise
From the heart's altar, warmed with sacred fire,
His dæmon foes behold, with raptured eyes,
The proof which seals his doom and gluts their ire,
And to the palace-gates with hurried step retire.

LXXIII.

And Daniel's crime before the King is laid,
And judgment asked by laws which cannot fail,
And King Darius, by his haste betrayed,
Mourns with hot tears, which cannot now avail,
And sentence must go forth. Perplexed and pale,
He bids his slaves the gloomy cavern open,
And whilst he strives his bitter grief to veil,
The fearless victim strains the grating rope,
And to his prison sinks, dark, yet illumed with hope.

LXXIV.

Morning had scarcely streaked the Eastern sky
With its first blush, ere kneels the King before
The lions' cavern with an anxious cry :
“ Servant of God ! can He thou dost adore
Save thee indeed, and still the savage roar
Of these infuriate monsters ? ” Then arose
The prophet's calm reply—“ He can restore
His servants, and deliverance work for those
Who on His mercy trust, whose innocence He knows.”

LXXV.

In haste the joyous Monarch bids his slaves
Remove the royal seal, and spread the gate
Wide, which gave entrance to the gloomy caves,
And bring the prophet forth,—that baffled Hate
May meet the fearful doom it had so late
Planned for the innocent ; and forth they bore
The man of God unharmed :—the doors of fate
Close on his doomed accusers, and their gore
Flows ere their bodies touch the dark, sepulchral floor.

LXXVI.

But now from honors, courts and cares, retires
The holy man, to studies and to prayer ;
Age had begun to quench his early fires,
For seventy years had vanished, since, a fair,
A goodly child, his anxious mother bare
His wearied limbs through Babel's thronging street ;
And in these latter days 'twas his to share
High converse, in his calm and fair retreat,
With angels spreading wide the Future's mystic sheet.

LXXVII.

Yea, many a glorious sight of after things
Fell on his raptured eye—he saw displayed
The Church's future glory, and the wings
Of angels and archangels o'er his head
Flashed visible music, bearing news which bade
His aged heart expand ; from them he knew
That seventy annual weeks¹⁷ should rise and fade.
And then should wake on earth's adoring view
Messiah—Saviour—God of Gentile and of Jew ;

LXXVIII.

And that the long captivity, which he
And exiled Judah bore in that far land,
Foreshadowed those dark years, ere man should see
That bright and great deliverance from the hand
Of Satan and of Sin ; the high command
Came from the throne of Glory, and he saw
Those typic years were numbered, and the band
Of Jews once more their ancient lot should draw,
And in their cherished home again restore the Law.

LXXIX.

Darius sleeps where Media's monarchs sleep,
In monumental pomp, and on his throne
The Persian Cyrus sits, his state to keep,
And rule the subject nations, now his own ;
Isaiah's heaven-taught pages had foreshown
That his should be the glory to release
Lone Judah from her chains,¹⁸ and bid her groan
Melt into smiles—her long affliction cease,
And all her clouds disperse before the sun of Peace.

LXXX.

And deeply in his heart had sunk the word
 Of prophecy, and in his ardent mind
 Deep thoughts, like voices of the trumpet, stirred
 To noble deeds his soul, and he resigned
 His will to that high destiny and shrined
 Its mandates in his heart ; and, ere a year
 Of regal sway had left its cares behind,
 The kingly proclamation, far and near,
 Had bade the farthest bounds of that wide Empire hear.

LXXXI.

“ Thus saith the King :—God hath on me bestowed
 Power over all Earth’s Kingdoms, and hath bade
 My hand establish His beloved abode,
 Where once it stood in goodly show displayed ;
 Let all whose vows to Israel’s God are paid—
 The only God—to Judah’s land return,
 Where’er among the subject nations spread,
 And build again the holy house, and burn
 Incense and victim there, and there His judgments learn.”¹⁹

LXXXII.

Then was there joy and gladness once again
In that long exiled nation :—Judah rose
Bright from the dust, where she so long had lain,
In all her virgin beauty, for the woes
Which pressed her down now left her to repose ;
Then from her long and troubled sleep she waked
To all the light which rising Freedom throws
In genial streams to Earth, wherein she slaked
Those hopes so long deferred with which her heart had ached.

LXXXIII.

Gladness and hope on every feature glowed,
As band by band, and tribe by tribe, they pressed
To Babel's walls, by many a distant road,
From town and province long their home of rest ;
And, as obedient to the King's behest
And their hearts' homeward yearnings, ranged they stood
On that wide plain, their faces to the West
They turned, and streaming tears their cheeks bedewed,
Soft as the April shower, with nought of grief imbued.

LXXXIV.

And forth they went, a glad and goodly train ;—
How far unlike the melancholy crew
Which seventy years before, in toil and pain,
Along proud Babel's streets their wailing threw ;
That race had well-nigh passed, and these, a new
And proud assemblage, turned their willing feet
To Judah's vine-clad hills, and deemed they drew
More vigorous breath, as balmy, soft and sweet,
The Western breeze from home their raptured senses greet.

LXXXV.

Yet were there some among that joyous band,
Who thro' long years their treasured thoughts could throw
Back to the scenes of childhood, and could stand,
In memory, on the mount, whereon the glow
Of the sun rested gorgeously, as low
He wheeled his evening course, and bathed in light
The Temple's pinnacles, and bade them show
Their golden outline, glittering, rich and bright,
Far o'er the lower lands till evening mixed with night.

LXXXVI.

And when from gilded spires the light had passed,
Leaving the solemn Temple all in shade,
It slept upon the waving column vast,
Which in the calm, still twilight, reared its head—
Smoke of the evening sacrifice—and played
Brightly around its top, like that of yore,
Whose moving course their fathers had obeyed,
When, toiling through the wilderness, they bore
From Egypt's hated land their tyrant's cherished store.

LXXXVII.

And oft upon that homeward march, they told
Strange tales of all their childish eyes had viewed
Within that glorious house—jewels and gold,
And precious things, in brilliant order strewed—
And gilded beams of odorous cedar wood
Magnificently carved, and relics kept
Within the ark, which could not be renewed,²⁰
Whose sad destruction Judah's sons had wept
Oft in their exile home, e'en whilst their children slept.

LXXXVIII.

And when they told how all that glorious pile
In ruins lay, o'erthrown and desolate—
Mark for Samaria's jibe and Gentile's smile—
The home where beasts or fiercer robbers wait—
Their aged eyes o'erflowed ; and then they sate
On some rude stone, and gave the rein to grief,
Till rose the thought that they to reinstate
That holy house had come, and soft relief
Fell on their troubled hearts, and made their mourning brief

LXXXIX.

And with renewed alacrity they sped
Across the stony plains which skirt the bound
Of Araby, and thence the deserts spread
Far by the walls of Tadmor ; till they found
Their feet upon the pleasant vallies round
Far-famed Damascus, and the waters blue
Of Abana and Pharpar ; then the mound
Of Tabor glads their sight, and soon they knew
The ruined heaps of home which rose upon their view.

XC.

Nearer they came, till, by the gentle brook
Of Kedron pausing, one,²¹ whose snowy hair
Waved brightly in the sun, his station took
Before the holy Mount, and kneeling there,
With outstretched hands, and reverend forehead bare.
He communed with his God, as erst he prayed
In Babylon his fervent, fearless prayer,
Though envious foes in ambush near were laid,
And though the lions' den its yawning portals spread.

XCI.

Thus ran his supplication :—"O, our God,
Who with thy mighty hand didst hither lead
Thy people from Ægyptia's dark abode,
From woes and pains and cruel bondage freed,—
Hear us, O LORD,—bow down thine ear, and heed
Thy people's supplications ;—for we know
That we have sinned, and urged, by many a deed
Of deadly hue, thy holy wrath to flow
On our deserving heads, with waves of bitter woe.

XCII.

“But let no more thy mighty anger burn,
O God of mercy! From thy holy seat—
Thy chosen heritage—in pity turn
The fierceness of thy wrath. Behold we meet
Bitter reproach and enmity's fierce heat
From the surrounding nations, and the gust
Of fiery persecution; but repeat
Thy favor as of yore, and from the dust
Restore thy holy hill, O Merciful and Just!

XCIII.

“O, let thy servant's voice before thy throne
Meet blest acceptance! For thy mercy's sake
Look with compassion on this City lone,
Which once thou deign'd'st thy earthly home to make,
And from thy Temple and thy altars take
The deep reproach by Heathen tyrants brought;
Behold our desolations, LORD, and break
The heavy chains of sorrow, which have wrought
Anguish in every heart, and crushed each fondest thought.”

XCIV.

The prophet ceased ; yet still he bent him there,
Perchance in *silent* worship ; but he kneels
So long, so mute, so motionless in prayer,
That each a silent apprehension feels,
And oft a glance of strange inquiry steals,
Yet fears to interrupt him, until one,
At length, with hesitating step, reveals
The half-suspected truth ;—his course is run—
Fit death for life of prayer—in worship sets his sun !

XCV.

And there, amid the prophets' sepulchres,
Daniel reposes—and around him rise
The walls, rebuilt by sad artificers,
And hindered long by cruel enemies ;
And well the tears became those aged eyes,²³
As, with the memories of the past, they view
The far diminished glory which supplies
Grace to that second Temple ;—yet they knew
At least it was their own,—the Temple of the Jew.

XCVI.

And after years beheld a glory²⁴ fall
On that late building, which surpassed the gold
And gorgeous hangings which adorned the wall,
The courts, the halls, the chambers of the old ;
When the long lapse of centuries had rolled
Its destined course, and to the world revealed
The HOLY ONE, whom prophets had foretold,
The Saviour of the nations, who unsealed
Shadows and hidden types, whose letter he repealed.

XCVII.

That second house no Shekinah could boast,
Lighting the Mercy Seat, and showing there
The presence of JEHOVAH to the host
Who filled the courts with sacrifice and prayer ;
But through its halls and sculptured gateways fair,
Passed, veiled in flesh, revealed to human eye,
The mighty God Himself, who deigned to bear
The sorrows of His people, to apply
Balm to their wounds, and died that they might never die.

XCVIII.

And from that meaner Temple, to all lands,
Hath sped the word of life, o'er fertile plain,
Deep-tangled forest, hot and burning sands,
And o'er the wild and solitary main;
Borne on by men of faith, through toil and pain
And persecution, e'en to life's last hour,
And leaving, when their souls returned again
To Him who sent them forth, a richer dower
Than ever monarch owned in times of palmiest power.

XCIX.

And to *these* shores, unknown, when in their day
Christ's earliest heralds fought their holy fight,
That word of power hath made resistless way,
And changed the moral darkness into light;
And in its train, refined, ennobled, bright,
By rays reflected from its sacred flame,
Its handmaid Science, like the moon at night,
Shedding her silvery glory, meekly came,
To aid that blessed power, which gave her strength and fame.

C.

And *here*, where late the untutored Savage trod,
She hath a seat to humanize the mind,
And bring its noblest energies to God ;
To draw its vigor forth, and then to bind
That vigor, strengthened, sanctified, refin'd,
Down to the noblest task that man can know,
The task to bless and reconcile mankind
To God's offended justice, and to show
What riches and what joys from Christ's atonement flow.

CI.

Go on and prosper ! From this classic seat
Let Truth, as from a centre, spread her rays,
Diverging and increasing, till they meet
And girdle earth in one wide, bright embrace !
Onward their march, till error finds no place
Wherein to hide ; till every desert shore
Bloom with the rose of Sharon—until praise
Load the four winds with melody, and pour
One universal song, to peal for evermore !

CII.

Go on and prosper ! Give to truth a voice
Of trumpet tone, till through the Earth it sound
Its glorious echoes, bidding man rejoice,
Shaking Sin's high-walled cities to the ground,
And bidding bondage (where the mind is bound
By Sin and Error,) cease the Earth to tread ;
That man redeemed, of every race, be found
Like Judah, from the walls of Babel led,
Pressing to that blest home where dwells their glorious Head !

NOTES.

NOTE 1. STANZA II. LINE 1.

Plain of Shinar.

The plain of Shinar, lying E. of the Euphrates, and between it and the Tigris, is nearly 300 miles in length, and about 100 in breadth. Babylon was situated near its N. W. extremity. When the historian Herodotus visited Babylon, this plain was extremely fertile, but it is now little better than a morass, covered with sedge and weeds, and inhabited by loathsome reptiles, &c. wonderfully verifying the words of the prophet, Isaiah xlii. 20, 21.

NOTE 2. STANZA IV. LINE 1.

Babylon the mighty.

How well this epithet applies, may be learned from the descriptions which historians give of this wonderful City. It was built in an exact square, each side measuring 15 miles. It was entered by 100 gates, 25 on each side, all of solid brass. From each gate a street, 150 feet wide, ran entirely across the City, intersecting the other streets at right angles. The wall, comprising a circuit of 60 miles, was 350 feet in height, and 87 feet in thickness. The Euphrates, which ran through the City, was crossed about the centre by a magnificent bridge:—at its east end stood the old Palace and the Temple of Belus; at the west end was situated the new Palace, which occupied nine entire squares of the City, and must consequently have been about 8 miles in circumference; a vault below the bed of the river afforded a secret communication between the two Palaces. The Temple contained the statue of Jupiter Belus, of solid gold, forty feet high, probably the same which Nebuchadnezzar erected on the plain of Dura. Its weight was one thousand Babylonian talents, and its value consequently, must have been about \$20,000,000. There were in the Temple, besides this, two other statues, of female deities, scarcely inferior in magnitude or value, which, together with the golden vessels, tables and other furniture, made the whole estimate of its riches amount to above \$100,000,000. How are the mighty fallen! “Babylon, the glory of Kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be (and truly is) as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

NOTE 3. STANZA IV. LINE 8.

Waving garden.

Perhaps nothing in that wonderful City was more wonderful than the hanging gardens. "To gratify his queen Amyte with a resemblance of her native mountains of Media, or to have a commanding prospect of the whole City, Nebuchadnezzar built them in his new Palace. They contained a square of 400 feet on each side, and consisted of terraces, one above another, carried up to the height of the walls of the City. Upon the uppermost terrace was a reservoir, supplied by an engine with water from the river."—*Brown's Dictionary*.

NOTE 4. STANZA VIII. LINE 5.

The stairs.

The river, where it passed through the City, was bounded on each side by a wall, of the same thickness with that which encompassed the City. In this wall, at the termination of each street, were brazen gates, and from them a descent by steps to the river.—*Brown's Dictionary*.

NOTE 5. STANZA XIV. LINES 7 AND 8.

*for he went**From Babylon so purposed.*

Josephus. Antiq. Book x. ch. viii., says—"they were indeed only generals of the King of Babylon, to whom Nebuchadnezzar committed the care of the siege of Jerusalem, for he abode himself in the City of Riblah." There is little doubt, however, that he was present during a part of the time, and was certainly absent from Babylon when the captives arrived there.

NOTE 6. STANZA XVIII. LINE 9.

Many a holy thing to touch and sight forbid.

These were the two tables of the Law—the golden pot of manna—Aaron's rod that budded—and a copy of the Pentateuch. The ark was so sacred, that it was death for any but the priests to look at it, and was therefore carried under a cover.

NOTE 7. STANZA XXI. LINE 5.

His orbless brow.

The eyes of Zedekiah, King of Judah, had been put out at Riblah, by command of Nebuchadnezzar, his children having been first murdered in his presence, as a punishment for his treachery and rebellion.

NOTE 8. STANZA XXI. LINE 7.

The double prophecy.

"Thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shall surely be taken and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the King of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon."—Jeremiah xxxiv. 3.

"I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there."—Ezekiel xii. 13.

NOTE 9. STANZA XXXI. LINE 1.

The holy fire.

The sacred fire, which descended at the dedication of the Temple by Solomon, was preserved till about the beginning of the Captivity in Babylon.

NOTE 10. STANZA XXXI. LINE 5.

The Urim and the Thummim.

These words signify *lights* and *perfections*, and are mentioned as being in the High Priest's breastplate; but what they were exactly with any certainty be determined; all that is known about them is, that they were consulted on occasions of great moment, and by some means, impossible to be discovered, gave an oracular reply.

NOTE 11. STANZA XXXIII. LINE 9.

That very plain.

The plain of Dura stretched away W. of the Euphrates, and as the temple of Belus lay on the E. side of the river, strictly speaking, in the plain of Shinar, the expression "that very plain" is not literally correct; yet as the two plains are often mentioned indiscriminately, when speaking of the region around Babylon, there cannot be any great impropriety in laying the scene of the confusion of tongues on the western side of the river.

NOTE 12. STANZA XXXV. LINE 2.

A god of gold.

Probably the same as that afterwards known as the Jupiter Belus, in the Temple of Babylon.

NOTE 13. STANZA XLV. LINE 5.

The feast.

It is almost a hopeless task to attempt a description of Belshazzar's feast, after it has been done so fully, so powerfully, and so poetically, in Martin's wonderful picture. I have, therefore, done little else than to endeavor to bring the leading objects of that great picture again to the reader's memory.

NOTE 14. STANZAS LII. LIII. LIV.

See Daniel v. 17—28.

NOTE 15 STANZA LVIII. LINE 2

*He hath turned**Aside Euphrates' waters.*

An enormous lake of about fifty miles in circumference, and from thirty to seventy-five feet deep, had formerly been dug on the west of the City, into which, during the annual freshet, caused by the melting of the Armonian snows, the superabundant waters of the river were diverted. Cyrus, despairing of taking the City by assault, turned off the stream of the Euphrates into this lake, and entered with his whole army through the low arches which carried the wall across the bed of the river. This, however, would have availed him nothing, but that the feast in honor of Belus happening the same night, had produced so great a neglect, that the gates leading down to the river, which were generally closed at night, had been left open, and the guards, asleep or intoxicated, were unable to offer any effectual resistance to the victorious army.

NOTE 16. STANZA LXX. LINE 9.

To the West.

It was, and still is, customary with the Jews, when offering up their supplications in a foreign land, to turn towards the Temple at Jerusalem: this was in accordance with the sentiment expressed in the prayer of Solomon, at the dedication.—1 Kings viii. 23—53

NOTE 17. STANZA LXXVII. LINE 7.

Seventy annual weeks.

Daniel ix. 24—27. Prideaux had traced out, with great industry and learning, the exact date of the decree issued by Cyrus for the restoration of Jerusalem, and proves that exactly 490 years elapsed from that event to the birth of the Saviour.

NOTE 18. STANZA LXXIX. LINES 5, 6, 7.

*Isaiah's heaven-taught pages had foreshown
That his should be the glory to release
Lone Judah from her chains.*

Isaiah xliv. 28.

NOTE 19. STANZA LXXVI.

Ezra. Chap. i. 2, 3, 4.

NOTE 20. STANZA LXXXVII. LINE 7.

Which could not be renewed.

Not only the holy things kept within the Ark, but the Ark itself, and all its furniture, had been lost during the Captivity. The second Temple was also deficient in other things which the first possessed, viz. the Shekinah, or cloud of the Divine Presence—the holy fire—the Urim and Thummim—and the spirit of Prophecy.

NOTE 21. STANZA XC. LINE 2.

One.

It is certain that Daniel lived till very near the end of the Captivity, and there is nothing to render his return to Jerusalem improbable. There can, therefore, be no impropriety in introducing him here.

NOTE 22. STANZAS XCI. XCII. AND XCIII.

Daniel ix. 4—19.

NOTE 23. STANZA XCV. LINE 5.

And well the tears became those aged eyes.

Ezra iii. 12.

NOTE 24. STANZA XCVI. LINE 1.

A glory.

Haggai ii. 9.



P O E M S .



POEMS.

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES.

WHAT though they tell thee thou hast nought,
Young land of beauty, to bear back,
Midst crumbling tower and fane, our thought
To Time's long hallowed track,—
That thine antiquity began
When other lands were growing old,
Thy name unwon, till Spain's bold son
Came to thy shores for gold ;—

Heed not the imputation thrown
So rashly on thy rising fame :
Each giant cone of thine was known
When Rome was but a name ;
Each glorious stream, which bears its foam
To the vast Ocean's deep repose,
Was known and named before a dome
On Tyber's banks arose.

His bow hath many a warrior bent
In deadly conflict or the chase,
Whose long descent was closely blent
With Judah's royal race ;
And many a sage had made his grave
By ceaseless Niagara's roar,
E'er Cæsar's legions crossed the wave
To Albion's chalky shore.

What are the castles' turrets gray,
Clothed with the moss of centuries ten,
Or what the scenes of fierce affray
Between half-savage men ?

Point to thy hills and rivers vast,
Rife with the deeds of glory's day,
Unknown because no muse hath shrined
Their memories in her lay.

What are the pyramids which tower
High o'er old Egypt's sandy plain,
Those altars to Oblivion's power,
Which Time has touched in vain?
Thou too, if aught of praise redounds
From home of death and mourning stone,
May'st boast thy mounds—thy burial grounds
Of heroes long unknown.

When Israel's tribes were captive led
To Gozan's deep and distant tide,
Far from the oppressor's hand they fled
O'er many a desert wide;
And many a foamy stream they passed,
And many a forest wandered through,
And trod at last the barriers vast
By Behring's waters blue.

But islands, since by fire subdued,*
 In ceaseless chain before them lay,
 And o'er the flood on rafts of wood
 They took their untried way,
 And trod these shores, before untrod
 By mortal foot since time began
 Alone — deserted by their God, —
 Deserting tyrant man.

And though full many an ancient rite
 Of sacrificial laws they bore,
 Preserved through Error's gloomy night,
 To this untrodden shore,
 Their end and spirit were forgot,
 Their lifeless forms they held alone,
 For they had brought no *record* fraught
 With Inspiration's tone:

And thus they lost that art† which bids
 Defiance to the tooth of Time;

* The Fox Islands, some degrees South of Behring's Strait
 of Volcanic action.

† The art of Writing.

When mounds and crumbling pyramids
Forget the tale sublime:
And the exciting deeds, which filled
The space of full two thousand years,
Lie unrevealed, in darkness sealed,
Where never ray appears.

Long else had been the scroll of fame
Thy storied Muse had handed down;
Else should thy lengthened annals claim
Antiquity's renown.
Lament it not: in every age
Too long the tale of woes and crimes:
Would that the sage had *torn* the page
He traced in ancient times!

Happy, unhistorian, art thou,
Happy, that thought may soar away
Where but Conjecture tells her how
Transpired the summer day.
Imagination paints with hues
More fair than Truth—old artist stern—
Better the deeds of old to lose,
Than blush the tale to learn.

MEMORY.

*" One clear idea wakened in the breast
By memory's magic lets in all the rest "*

MOORE.

How finely memory's chords are strung !
The slightest touch will wake a strain
Which long ago our childhood sung,
But hath not wakened since again :
Some far-off music faintly caught,
Rouses the energies of thought,
And back upon the soul return
Scenes, forms and faces long forgot,
Kind words that bade the bosom burn,
And looks of Love which changeth not,
Connected, how we know not well,
With that faint music's magic swell.

I sat a lazy brook beside,
Marking its slow and silent tide ;
It passed the tree that gave me shade,
Scarce rippled by the knotted limb
Which lay across its course, and made
A barrier to its waters dim.—
Then with a long and gentle sweep
Through level fields it held its way,
Till down a chasm dark and deep
It vanished with a sudden leap,
Studding the rocks with silver spray.

All, all was strange, I sought in vain
Semblance to some familiar scene ;
The link was gone from memory's chain,
Severed the golden thread between
Present and Past, which should convey
The electric flash of thought away
To distant points of joy or tears,
Made faint and fainter day by day
By the still thickening veil of years.

I sat beside that lazy brook,
Tracing the devious track it took,

And fancied in my waking dream
I looked on Life's symbolic stream ;
Gentle and weak, but pure, at first,
Leaving with smiles the fostering breast,
Where long and fondly it was nursed,
Till, far beyond that home of rest,
It mingled with the grosser tide,
By many a distant source supplied ;
In fuller strength and influence wide,
But lower, level than before,
Sweeping along in stately pride,
But decked with purity no more ;
Its surface wreathed with smiles and gold,
Its breast beneath foul, dark and cold.

As thus I mused, beneath mine eye
A mimic vessel floated by :
The hull, a chip ; the mast, a reed ;
A strip of bark supplied the sail ;
The streaming flag, a water weed ;
The precious load, a rusty nail ;
That poor device of childhood's play,
To cheat the lagging hours away,

Gave the lost link to Memory's chain,
And when I raised mine eyes again
The scene had changed ; before me spread
The fields in recognition smiled,
The tree above me seemed to shed
The very leaves upon my head
It showered around me when a child ;
The twisted limb which swept the tide,
Brought visions crowding on my brain
Of chip-boats caught by eddies wide,
Deprived of mast, sail, pennon, vane,
By bending twig or hanging bough ;
And so perchance the urchins now,
Who play around this grassy brink,
Behold their hopes and vessels sink.

So small the links that form the chain
Which binds the Present to the Past ;
So web-like are the chords we strain
In thought across the torrent vast
Of rolling years to scenes beyond,
A slender, but a mighty bond,
Like frail Al Sirat, which supplies
The Moslem's path to Paradise.

THE PLAY-GROUND REVISITED.

ANOTHER tree, and yet the same,
Round which in boyhood's hour I played,
Witness of many an anxious game,
Contested in its giant shade;
Beneath *this* branch the ring was made,
Here was the line for "knuckling down,"
On yonder knarly root were laid
Superfluous jackets, blue and brown,
And caps, that on each curly crown
Were seldom seen, save when we went
Sworded and feathered through the town,
On deeds of desperate knighthood bent:
And when, with Pleasure's labor spent,
Brief rest we sought in Summer's heat,
Yon shady bench its refuge lent;
E'en now upon its mouldering seat,

With feelings deep and strangely sweet,
Full many a well remembered name
In rudest letters carved I greet.—
We yearn—how early! after Fame—
Alas! of all who joined our game
When those young names were graved, how few
Since have I seen, or now may claim
Our boyish friendships to renew.
O'er some of that once merry crew
The grave has closed, o'er some the Sea,
Some to their homes have bade adieu
For years, perchance eternally;
And some who stood around that tree
Happy with childhood's careless play,
From vice and sensual influence free,
Have thrown their innocence away,
In vain pursuits grown early gray;
In look deformed, in soul and mind
Degraded by the sins that prey
Upon the vitals of mankind.
O! would they cast a look behind
To this old tree, and think how fair,
From Guilt's dark influence disentwined,
Their hours of early boyhood were,

Perchance they yet might breathe a prayer
To be from Folly free again,
To fly from Pleasure's dangerous snare,
And break the links of Passion's chain.

O! Joy is ever mixed with Pain
In this strange world.—I cannot think
Of those who joined our merry train
In former years, but I must shrink
From following Memory's golden link
When to the Lost my mind it leads :
I came to this old well to drink
Refreshing draughts,—and lo! the seeds
Of bitter memories grow to weeds
Upon its waters.—

Yet the spring
Is not *all* filled with slimy reeds ;—
Flowers of rich hues and odors cling
Around its marge, and they shall fling
Pleasure so sweet upon my sense,
That the fond thoughts and hopes they bring
Shall drive all painful memories thence.

BY-GONE DAYS.

How do the mists of Memory dress
Our childhood's scenes in loveliness !
How through the vistas of the past
Our thoughts will wander, and forget
The clouds above the present cast,
While Fancy paints the fair vignette
Which stands upon Life's title-page
With hues which glad the eye of age ;
Hues which in truth it never wore,
But which to childhood's joyous eye
It seemed to wear in days of yore,
And after life would fain believe,
Despite of cold philosophy,
That Fancy *there* could not deceive.

How oft before my mental sight,
Dressed in such robes of fairy light,
Comes up the rude and rocky shore
My infant footsteps wandered o'er.
The crescent beach along whose marge
The waters of the ebbing tide
Their freight of weeds and foam discharge,
Where tiny billows curl and break,
Leaving a soft and snowy streak,
The limits of two Empires wide ;
The frowning cliffs on either side
With bascs buried in the beach,
Like giant arms extended, reach
Far out where stormy billows ride
And buffet with the wilder waves
That roar around their echoing caves.
While the blue water sleeps between
Those rocky barriers all serene,
A little bay whose soft repose
Seldom and slight disturbance knows.
How oft across that placid bay
Hath danced my Lilliputian barque,
And as it swiftly sped away
Mine anxious eyes its course would mark,

Now bright with joy to see it brave
Some ripple which I deemed a wave ;
Now dim with terror as its mast
Bent to some overpowering blast,
Which scarce disturbed the thistle down,
Or shook the poppy's silken crown.

No merchant marked with greater glee
His gallant, gold filled argosy
Press home, her voyage of peril done,
Than I, when o'er the mighty tide,
Stretching full fifty fathoms wide,
My-six inch ship her course had run,
And struck with leaden keel the sand
Which formed the "make believe" far-land.

Those days have passed, and many a year
Hath vanished since that beach I prest,
But still in memory's eye as clear,
As though but yesterday I drest,
Sweet sister ! aided well by thee,—
My ship in muslin sails, and made
My blocks of cork, my ropes of thread,
And sent her o'er the mimic sea.

Each cavern there, each stock and stone
Brightly on memory's vision glow,
Like old acquaintance kindly known.
Ah ! easier task those rocks to know
Than face of friends seen long ago.
The cavern and the rock are there,
The very same they ever were,
But those who watched my infant play,
Oh, tell me *where* and *what* are they ?
Vanished or changed — and I should be
As changed to them as they to me.

NIAGARA.

DESCRIBE Niagara!—Ah, who shall dare
Attempt the indescribable, and train
Thought's fragile wing to skim the heavy air,
Wet with the cataract's incessant rain?
The glowing "muse of fire," invok'd in vain
By Shakspeare, who shall hope from Heaven to win?
And "burning words" alone become the strain,
Which to the mind would bring the awful din
Where seas in thunder fall, and eddying oceans spin.

Long had the savage on thy glorious shroud
Fring'd with vast foam wreaths, gaz'd with stoic eye,
And deemed that on thy rising rainbow cloud
The wings of the Great Spirit hovered nigh,
And, as he marked the solemn woods reply

In echoes to thy rolling thunder tone,
He heard *His* voice—upon the breeze go by,
And his heart bowed—*for* to the heart alone
God, speaking through *His* works, make what He utters
known.

But ages passed away—and to the West
Came Europe's sons to seek for fame or gold,
And one, perchance, more daring than the rest,
Lured by the chase, or by strange stories told
By Indian guide of oceans downward rolled,
Felt on his throbbing ear thy far-off roar,
Then sped the mighty wonder to behold,
Thy voice around him and thy cloud before,
Till breathless—trembling—rapt—he trod thy foaming shore.

Upward he gazed to where, with furious hiss,
Thy waters spurn the precipice, and leap
Into the vexed and indistinct abyss
Where Rage and Tumult ceaseless battle keep,
Filling, with roar monotonous and deep,
The wearied echo;—there he fixed his gaze,
Like one entranced who fears to break his sleep,
Lest the wild vision fade that sleep doth raise,
All thought lock'd up and chain'd in stern and strange amaze.

Till, slowly rallying from the first surprize,
 Thought from its magic prison breaks at last,—
 The gazer from the foam-whirl lifts his eyes
 And scans thy whole arena wild and vast;
 From point to point his eager glances cast,
 Take by degrees thy wide circumference in,
 And as his speechless wonder slowly passed,
 Delight succeeded, deep, intense and keen,
 Heart, soul and sense absorbed in that unrivalled scene.

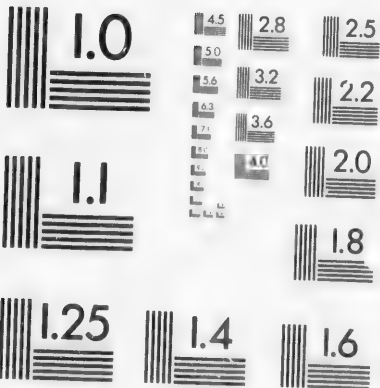
Then through his mind like lightning flashed the thought,
 Once o'er the Patriarch's soul in Bethel thrown,
 "Sure God is with me, and I knew it not."
 His power in yon majestic zone
 Of mighty waters, and its thunder tone
 Brings to mine ear His voice—and deeply felt,
 And almost seen His Presence reigns alone.—
 Then meekly by the rock the wanderer knelt,
 Feeling in awe and love his heart's full fountain melt.

And long with shaded eye and bended head
 He prayed before that Temple's wond'rous veil,
 Whilst from its foot, in ceaseless eddies spread,
 The mist-cloud rose, like incense, on the gale ;



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And half he deemed that on its pinions frail
His prayers, upborne, would blessed acceptance know ;
He rose with gladdened eye and heart to hail
Mercy's fair type and seal, the rainbow's glow
Spanning with calm embrace the troubled scene below.

And when the westering day-beam warned him back,
Lingering he stood, as spell-bound by the strain,
And oft he started on his homeward track,
And oft returned one parting glance to gain ;
And twilight had usurped its fitful reign
Ere to thy foam his last farewell he bade,
Then like an arrow, o'er the woody plain
Homeward he hurried through the deepening shade,
Again in dreams to view thy wonders round him spread.

And oft alone, and oft with friends he came
To scan thy charms, and worship at thy shrine,
And feel again devotion's hallowed flame
Blaze in thy presence fanned with breath divine :
And oft from morning until day's decline
He sat and mused beside thee, for his eye
Saw nowhere majesty and grace like thine ;
And in his soul thy mighty minstrelsy
Woke stern and glorious thoughts, and visions wild and high.

In silence long forgot the wanderer sleeps ;—
But still as when thou met'st his startled gaze,
Thy glorious scene the heart in wonder steeps
Of him who seeks thee in these later days :—
Sublime in simple grandeur ! Art can raise
No rival to thy throne, nor words convey
Thine image to the mind, though noblest lays
Have vied in thy description.—Day by day
Thy roar shall speak of God till Nature fade away.

ATHENS.

CITY of Gods and heroes ! In the dust
The foot of Time—the tyrant and the slave,
Have trodden down thy glory, and the grave
Holds all thy greatness ;—the corroding rust
Of centuries has bid the record pass
From sculptured marble and memorial brass ;
The hundred columns of thy Parthenon
Were all too few the massive roof to bear,
And undisturbed the birds and summer air
Find passage, where, disjointed one by one,
Pillar and portico the Earth have strewed,
Like ancient trees in forest solitude.

The wingless Victory, in thine hour of pride
Enshrined and chained, that she may never leave
Her seat in the Acropolis, nor give
Her smiles to thine antagonist, has died:—
Unwinged and bound, like Love, her life *must* end,
She could not flee, and thou couldst not defend,
And o'er her grave, deserted by thy sons,
Oft hath the foeman's shout of triumph rolled,
And bondsmen's slaves have given for strangers' gold
The sculpture from her shrine, which barbarous Huns,
Less classic, but therein more truly kind,
Left in their desolating march behind.

Well could thy Pericles design, and well
Thy Phidias execute; but how the rush
Of Time and War and Ignorance may crush
Genius and Taste, thy ruined towers may tell.
The torch of Attila,—the iron shower
Of Venice,—and the Moslem's grinding power
Have cursed thee in their turn; and from thy brow
Have crumbled one by one the precious things
Which Art designed to give thy glory wings
Wherewith to fly o'er Earth;—behold them now
Spurned by base feet, or borne across the sea
To lands unknown to fame when thou wert free.

The works of man, erected for renown,
Are fallen or falling,—but the hills remain
Around thee, reared by God, and shall retain
Those names, which were the jewels of thy crown,
When time hath broken every chiselled stone,
And scarce their sites and stations shall be known.
The mount of Mars no mark of ruin shows—
Cithæron is yet beautiful—the hill
Of Pynx arises in its glory still—
Still on Hymettus evening's radiance glows
And marks no change, though many a goodly wall,
Dug from its quarries, trembles to its fall.

Thou hast been long degraded, but thy night
At length beholds a dawn, and o'er the plains
Where late raged Anarchy, mild Order reigns,
And Law and Justice shed their equal light:—
And a New World, which had received no name
Till many a century since thy day of fame,
Sends her enlightened heralds to unbind
The veil of Ignorance which wraps thy heart,
Thou once proud fount of Knowledge and of Art,
And to relight within thy darkened mind
The lamp of holy truth, that thou again
May'st hold thy station in the ranks of men.

SPRING.

CLOUDS of the mountain
And mist of the plain,
Spray of the fountain
And foam of the main,
Flee from your station
On pinions of air,
The face of creation
No shadow shall wear.

Bright from the Ocean,
O day-star, arise !
Speed thy glad motion
Along the blue skies !
Scatter thy glory
On valley and lea,
On mountain top hoary,
On streamlet and tree.

Leap from your slumber,
Ye flowrets, in mirth,
Deck without number
The bosom of Earth ;
Give out your treasure
Of odors and hues ;
Stint not the measure
Of joy ye diffuse.

Nature rejoices ;
Ye birds of the grove,
Pour out your voices
Of music and love ;
Stretch forth your pinions,
Your plumage renew,
Air's broad dominions
Are open for you.

Swift flowing rivers
Are open again ;
Soft Spring delivers
From fetters the main ;

Glad fins are lashing
The billows in play—
Bright scales are flashing
In streamlet and bay.

Forests are showing
Green mantles again—
Verdure is glowing
O'er valley and plain;
Labor is guiding
The plough-share in toil,
Safely confiding
The seed to the soil.

Soft breezes breathing
From climates serene,
Where spice-flowers wreathing
Their tendrils are seen,
Float rich and balmy
O'er Nature's broad breast,
And, whispering calmly,
Hush sorrow to rest.

Rejoice thee, O mortal,
In spring's gentle noon,
Death's gloomy portal
Shall open full soon—
And hallow life's morning
To life's holy King,
And Death's wintry warning
No terrors shall bring.

TO A CLOUD.

FLEECY cloud, I envy thee,
Soft and white-robed wanderer there,
O'er a pure and silent sea,
Lonely, passionless and fair;
Who on Earth would pine unblest,
Mix with rage and strive with care,
Could he fly and be at rest
In thy home of boundless air?

On thy free and gentle course
What hast thou to fear or shun?
Even though the tempest hoarse
Howl when darkness has begun,
*8

Thou upon his steeds can'st sit,
Safe as when the evening sun
Hath thy quiet pathway lit
To the coming twilight dun.

Though the keen-edged lightning's spear
Through thy form a passage find,
Soon the wound shall disappear,
Leaving not a pang behind.
Who the pains of Earth can bear,
Pains of body and of mind,
Nor betray the aching care
Which around his heart hath twined?

Thou canst look on all below
From thy high and holy seat—
Smile at nations' overthrow,
Caused by man's unbridled heat—
Mark the tide of human things
O'er their ancient barriers beat—
And expand unruffled wings
Where the storms of passion meet.

Man their changes too may mark—

Man may battle with their wave—

But amid the tumult dark

Nought he finds that man should crave ;

He may mix amid the fray,

Now to cheer and now to save,

But he bears at best away

Broken heart or troubled grave.

Oh ! to spend with thee on high,

Lovely cloud, a sinless day,

In the free and holy sky,

Far from care and strife away.

Hold ! the wish were impious, vain ;—

Rather while on Earth we stay,

Strive its tumults to restrain—

Strive its sorrows to allay.

Then when life's brief sun hath gone

Downward to its evening close,

If Religion's hand hath drawn

Glory round its soft repose,

Far above thy home shall rise,
Free the soul from fears and foes,
And from purer, holier skies,
Pitying look on human woes.

Then, than thou more highly blest,
Far its chainless wings shall sail,
Where no storm shall mar its rest,
No dark shades its beauty veil;
But around its sinless breast,
Light, whose glories cannot fail,
Still shall float a fadeless vest,
Where the Sun himself were pale.

RIZPAH.

THE love of woman ! what a deep
And fixed devotion marks her love !
Billows may rage, and whirlwinds sweep,
But they are powerless to remove
That rooted principle—her breast
Seems with its influence all possess—
In her it hath a mighty power,
Force cannot quench nor terror tame—
Slumber it may in joyous hour,
But blazes with redoubled flame
When foes invade or sorrows frown,
Or suffering seeks its light to drown—
It trembles to the slightest breath,
But conquers agony and death.

A female form, with hair unbound,
And haggard eye with famine dim,
And sunken cheek and wasted limb,
Sits houseless on the chilly ground,
Her thin hands clasped upon her knee,
Her head the rock's hard pillow presses,
Whose points, despite her ample tresses,
Her fair brow lacerate—but she
Feels not the agony they bring,
For deeper woes her bosom wring—
The body's pangs how light and vain,
Compared with that intenser pain
Which numbs the heart and burns the brain!

Who are the sleepers scattered round,
On whom her anxious looks repose?
Her quick ear, quickened by her woes,
Hath caught from far the whirring sound
Of night birds' wings, and up she springs
To scare them from the sleepers' bed—
The jackall's cry is sounding nigh,
The panther steals with silent tread—
He cannot shun that watchful eye,
Which through the long night slumbers never—

The surly bear goes prowling by,
But there is one who guards the way
Between him and his destined prey,
Frail, faint and sad, but dauntless ever!
The savage monsters shrink away
From those wild eyes unearthly ray,
They flee the gesture of that hand,
That hollow voice's stern command—
The majesty of love is there
The strength of weakness, and the power
To do, to suffer, and to dare,
The high soul, nerved by dark despair,
Gives the frail arm in trial's hour.

The sun upon her sleepless eye
Rises in cloudless brilliancy—
But rouses not that slumbering band,
The objects of her ceaseless care—
Why wake they not to greet his rays?
The breeze of morning, soft and bland,
Lifts their long hair, and fluttering plays
Among their vesture—doth it there
For them no joyous influence bear?

Nor summer's sun, nor summer's air
Shall glad their eye or warm their cheek—
Those livid features once were fair—
Fondly those blood-sealed lips could speak
Once to that lovely watcher—now
Death's signet is upon their brow,
The bloated worm and foul decay
Have banquet held for many a day
Within their long insensate clay—
But she, whose fond maternal breast
Once formed the pillow of their rest,
For weeks unwearied and alone
Hath sat beside their gibbet stone,
Her only care to watch and weep,
The guardian of their dreamless sleep.
The dews by night, the heats by day
Have fallen on her defenceless head,
Nor chilled nor scorched her love away,
Nor sleep hath charmed her eyeballs red
From their long watch, nor hunger driven
Her wasted body from the rock,
Love its most holy power hath given
To that lone heart, by sorrow riven,
At frailty, famine, death to mock—

She hath had strength to conquer all
That might the bravest breast appal.

Rizpah ! thy task is ended now—
Behold, o'er yonder mountain's brow
The men of Judah come to bear
The bodies to their father's tomb—
Bind up thy long dishevelled hair,
Chase from thy brow the cloud of gloom ;—
With pomp thy dead they shall inhume,
Pomp that becomes the sons of Saul,
Fresh flowers upon the bier shall bloom ;
And 'scutcheons deck the funeral pall.
Quit then thy solitary seat
For some serene and fair retreat,
Where from the dismal scene removed,
Rife with the fate of those beloved,
Thy days and thy subsiding woe
On to their close may gently flow,
And thou of mothers queen confessed,
Shalt sleep with those thou lov'dst the best.

LETHE.

“GIVE me,” the sorrowing Roman cried,
“To drink of Lethe’s blessed tide,
For woes too great for man to bear
The Gods upon my heart have thrown,
And the dark spectre of despair
Falls upon memory’s eye alone.
Could I but taste that stream of Peace,
Hope might revive and sorrow cease—
The past, a blank, the future free
For new pursuits, and pleasures new,
Life may again move cheerily,
Unblasted by the shades which threw
Ill-omened colors, vaguely cast,
Far o’er the future from the past.”

The lip is mute which woke the word—
Long stilled the heart which sorrow stirred—
And Lethe's stream, that could assuage
The woes which curse the sons of clay,
Lives only in the classic page—
The school-boy's dream,—the poet's lay.

But if that fabled stream could glide
Through earth, with all that power supplied
With which mythology once thought
Its dark and slumberous waters fraught,
Still, still how few would bend the lip,
That dim, oblivious stream to sip,—
Save those, who rushing on their fate,
Weigh no results and count no cost,
Nor pause to think, or pause too late,
When thought recalled declares them lost.
What though along the path of life
Lie many a trace of bitter strife,
What though the whirlwind and the storm
At times across its course have driven,
Though rains too fierce and suns too warm
Waste and sterility have given,

Have there not risen some holier joys
Those hours of gloom to counterpoise ?
Were there not heights along the road
Which floods have never overflowed ?
Were there no shady bowers to meet
The scorching sun's intensest heat ?
No rock, on caverned arches based,
To shelter from the whirlwind's haste ?

Pause ere thine eager lip is wet
With Lethe's tide, and ponder o'er
The days and hours thou wouldst forget,
Days, hours, to be reviewed no more—
Think that within their circle rise
All boyhood's blessed memories,
When through hope's many-colored glass
Thou look'dst on life, and saw it pass,
With hues of beauty round it thrown,
And gorgeous colors not its own,
When care was but a passing word,
Whose meaning was to thee unknown,
When thou couldst carol like the bird,

And like the bird roam far and free
By mossy rock or shady tree,
And deem their beauties thine alone—
When grief, if grief assailed those hours,
Was but a passing summer cloud,
Melting in brief and fitful showers,
With rays of sunshine glancing through,
Too bright for shadows long to shroud,
Or, if they shrouded, but to strew
Their dimness with the rainbow's huc.

Think, ere thou taste the oblivious tide
Thou wouldst from memory's tablet blot
The blessings ripening youth supplied—
Blessings which life reneweth not—
The generous warmth of hearts unchilled
By contact with an icy world—
The trusting confidence which filled
The breast of childhood, yet unstilled,
Though Doubt had many a missile hurled
With bitter force and deadly aim—
Hours, when young Friendship's sacred flame,
Too bright to die, too soft to harm,
Conferred on life a double charm—

Hours, when the thirst for happiness
Came o'er the heart in such excess,
That still the renovated sun
Saw the pursuit again begun,
And though condemned the prize to miss,
The very chase itself was bliss—
Hours, when the light of "Love's young dream"
Danced ceaseless o'er life's onward stream,
Changeful indeed, but ever bright,
Like streamers of the northern light,
Aye, and as many-hued as they,
Yet filled with warmth unknown to them,
The life springs glowed beneath its ray,
Flashing and sparkling like the gem
Filled with the strong electric spark
Within the artist's chamber dark.

Pause, if a wife have blessed thy side,
Pure, loving and beloved by thee,
Pause, ere thou drink that flattering tide—
Pause, if a child have climbed thy knee—
Oh, canst thou in all after life
Recall that soft delicious strife

Of doubt and joy and hope, which rolled
Swift through thy heart when thou didst hold
That hand resigned to thee alone,
And first didst feel its timid pressure
Gently responding to thine own,
Proof that thou hadst obtained the treasure
Much sought, and soon thy heart to cheer
For long, long days of doubt and fear?

Say, can thine after years renew
That first strange thrilling joy which flew
O'er heart and brain when on thine ear
Came up thy first-born's plaintive cry,
Or when, beholding it, a tear
Produced by feelings new and dear,
A father's feelings—dimmed thine eye?

Joys such as these, and many more,
Mortal, thou canst, whoc'er thou art,
Draw out from Memory's hidden store,
To soften and to bless the heart.
The very retrospect of pain,
Of sorrow, danger, woe and care,

May wake feelings which contain
More that is soothing, soft and true,
Than sad or bitter.—

If to lose
With painful memories all the good
Be Lethe's gift—be mine to choose
That sweetest joy of solitude,
The memory of the past, with all
Or dark, or bright her power can bring;—
And if the one may thought appal,
The other still a light shall fling,
So glorious that the shades of pain
Shall sink to rise no more again.

THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN.

The hosts of God, by Joshua led,
Approach the Jordan's eddying tide,
And priests, with veiled and bended head,
Bear to its grassy side
The Ark, beneath whose cherub wings
Are kept the pure and precious things ;—
Behind the morn its radiance flings
On bannered lance and buckler bright,
And brazen trump, whose music rings
To hail the dawning light.

The flood before them boils and leaps
Along its deep and rocky bed,
But still the moving column keeps
Onward its fearless tread,

As though no foamy current flowed
Between it and the blest abode,
To which by many a thorny road
And desert plain its steps had past,
And which in morning's glory glowed
Green, beautiful and vast.

And now the Levites' sandalled feet
Are moistened by the river's edge,
Which curls and breaks with murmur sweet
Amid the bending sedge.
Yet pause they not; with heart of prayer,
And faith supported strength they bear
That which the torrent shall not dare
Submerge or mar with angry tide—
They know not how—but know that there
God will a way provide.

Their faith hath triumphed;—with the sound
Of rushing thunder backward fly
The affrighted billows, and the ground
They moistened now is dry;

Cleft in the midst the waters stand
Obedient to their God's command,
Towering aloft on either hand
 A glassy and resplendent heap,
Where scenes which blessed the promised land
 In mirrored beauty sleep.

And fearless down the dark defile
 The countless hosts of Israel go,
And loud from trump and harp the while
 The strains of gladness flow.
The depths that voices never gave,
But those of warring wind and wave,
Send from their dark and oozy grave
 The echoing tread of joyous throngs,
And praise of Him whose hand can save,
 In loud triumphant songs.

And now the farther shore they gain,
 And kneeling kiss the promised spot,
Which through long years of toil and pain
 Their anxious steps had sought.
Whilst with a wild and maddening roar
The tides, disjoined from shore to shore,

Their long suspended waters pour
To fill the yawning gulf between,
Closed is the bright mysterious door
By which they entered in.

Christian, behold the typic shade
Of that dim path prepared for thee—
Behold in Jordan's tide displayed
Death's ever flowing sea.
Thou treadest still life's desert plain
In toil and sorrow, care and pain;
Trials and doubts and fears maintain
With thee a fierce and bitter strife,
And but for heavenly aid would gain
The conquest o'er thy life.

Yet soon that toilsome war shall cease,
And thou beside the flood shalt stand,
Beyond whose waves are realms of peace,
A pure and holy land.
But if thou still hast kept the ark
Of God before thee as a mark,

Fear not the troubled waters dark,
Howe'er they rage and chafe and roar,
On that mysterious voyage embark,
And God will guide thee o'er.

Pass boldly on in faith and prayer,
And waves of doubt and floods of fear
Shall part and leave a passage there
To changeless glories near.
The dim obscurity shall fail
In Death's dark pass and shadowy vale,
And thou with gladdened eye shalt hail
Bright glimpses of the glorious things
Which lie beyond and render pale
The angels' flashing wings.

And when thou'st gained that blessed shore
Forever freed from sin and pain,
Death's cheated waves shall hiss and roar,
Mingling their streams again.
Thence ever closed, that shadowy door
Shall entrance give to earth no more—

But thou shalt reach the golden floor
By Jesus lit and angels trod,
Ever and ever to adore
Thy Savior and thy God.

THE KENNEBEC.

He, who hath sped the billows o'er,
Which break on Maine's rock-girdled shore,
Will marvel when those rocks are passed,
Which seem like sturdy barriers cast
Against the tempest and the tide,
How calm within, how soft and fair,
How robed in glory and in pride
The smiles and hues of Nature are.

There, Kennebec, like childhood's dream,
Flows on thy full and placid stream,
Now clasping in its soft embrace
Some islet with its woody crown,
Now hurrying on with swifter pace
Where rocky barriers sloping down
Give narrower egress to thy tide,
And press thy waves on either side.

And thou dost yield where Nature throws
Her bars thy wide expanse to close ;
But where those puny efforts rise,
Thrown up by man thy course to stay,
Thy waters free those bars despise,
And thou dost sweep them all away,
Thou wilt not let *his* arm restrain
Thy march to join the mighty main.

What lovely scenes, fair river, rise
Along thy banks, and in thy stream
Reflected each in beauty lies
Like paintings of a fairy dream.
Through tangled dell and forest deep
Thy new-born waves in gladness leap
Through groves once bright with council fire,
By fortress-rock and signal hill,
Where Indian warrior roamed at will,
And where, unworthy of their sire,
His wretched offspring wander still,—
His vigor and his spirit fled—
All but the name changed, lost or dead.

But thou art sweeping on the same
As when that race bestowed thy name,
On by the rock which memory keeps
Of where good Ralle in silence sleeps ;
On, by the vale and by the hill,
The classic spires of Waterville,
And many a town of lesser name,
Till, sweeping round the broken bar
Which man did make and thou didst mar,
Augusta, like some lovely dame,
Sits by thy flood and sees her grace
Reflected in thy glassy face.

Thence on with calmer, deeper swell,
Thou lav'st the shores of Hallowell ;—
Thence, onward still, thy streams divide,
Twin sisters of thy widening tide,
Gardiner and Pittston ; fair they spread,
'Mid verdant slope and forest shade ;
The gothic spire that crowns the hill,
In thought, before me rises still,
Such as it rose, ere hid from view,
By curving bank and wooded height,

When to your shores we bade adieu,
Homes of true kindness and delight.
Ah! swiftly passed the light-winged hours,
Amid your hospitable bowers,
And soon arrived the destined day,
To bear us from those bowers away,
And soon upon her foamy path,
The steamer gained the shores of Bath,
Where, pausing well-known forms to leave
And stranger voyagers to receive,
Soon to thy tide she bade adieu
And slept on ocean's billows blue.

And oft in thought thy quiet scenes
Come o'er my mind,—O gentle river,
And through thy green and waving screens
I see the trembling sunlight quiver
Across thy face ; or, as at eve,
When sunset's beams a rose-robe weave,
So deep the smile of Heaven impressed
Along thy still and mirrored breast ;
I've seen extend from shore to shore
The ripple of the boatman's oar.

Still calm be thou, and calm the days
Of those who on thy "banks and braes,"
Have found a quiet, fair retreat !
Far from thy vales be War's red heat !
Far, strife of arms and battle flood,
Staining thy Paradise with blood !
Rather let Peace to ploughshares beat
The swords rash valour bade to shine
Erewhile along thy northern line,
And teach those nobler arts which spread,
Not mar, the gifts which God has shed.

